

# Geranium Plume Moth

J. T. Pennell

Department of Entomology  
Cornell University

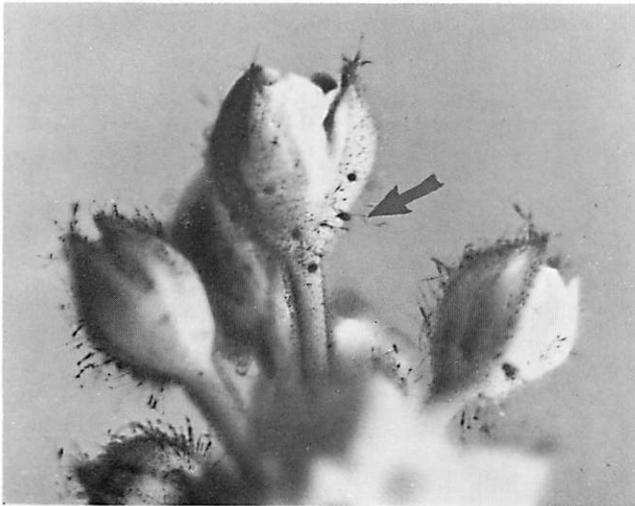
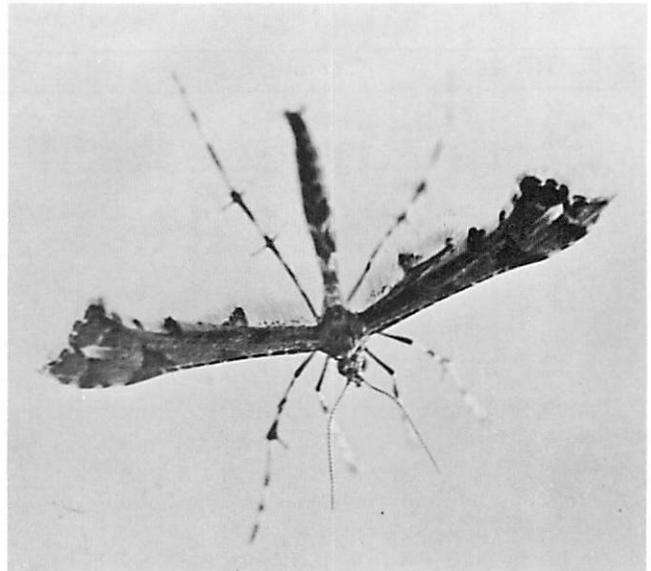


FIGURE 1. Eggs of Geranium plume moth on Geranium flower buds.

The fully grown caterpillar of the geranium plume moth is yellow-green or "port-wine" red in color, and grows to a length of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. (Figure 2). The caterpillars feed on the flower buds of the Geranium. (Figure 3). They will often burrow completely into the center of the bud. The caterpillars are difficult to "pick-out" from their surroundings.



## Adult Plume Moth

The Geranium plume moth lays its eggs on the flower bud stalks and leaves of Geranium plants. The eggs are small and light green in color—they can barely be seen by the naked eye. (Figure 1). The eggs hatch into small caterpillars.

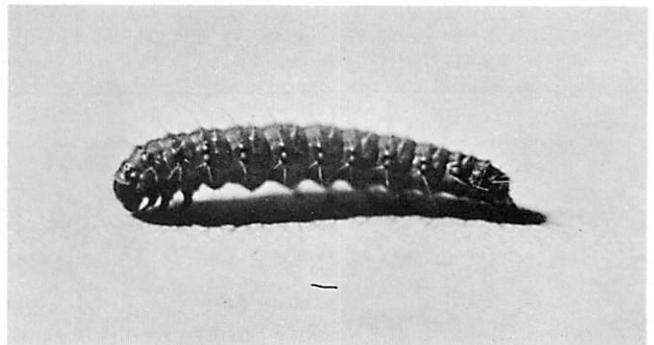


FIGURE 2. Larva of Geranium plume moth.

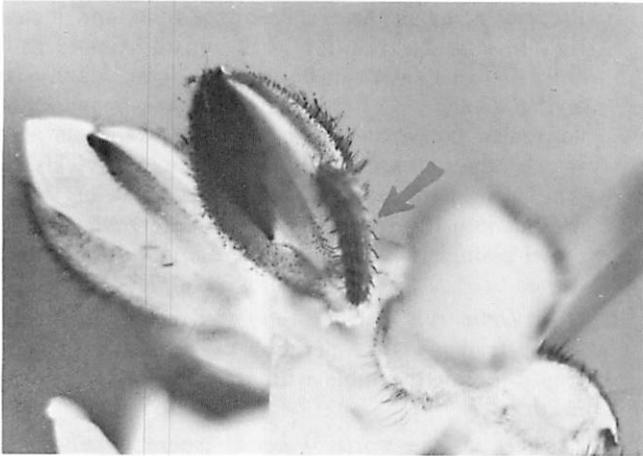


FIGURE 3. Larva of Geranium plume moth feeding on flower bud.

#### CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS

2 level tablespoons Zectran 25 W in 1 gallon of water (or 2 lbs. Zectran 25 W in 100 gallons of water).

OR

2 teaspoonsful Zectran 2 E in 1 gallon of water (or 1 quart Zectran 2 E in 100 gallons of water).

The plants should be sprayed until the leaves just begin to drip.

Two treatments 10 days apart may be needed.



FIGURE 5. Pupa of Geranium plume moth attached to leaf stalk.

The black droppings, left by the caterpillars as they feed on the Geranium flower buds, are the most easily seen sign of plume moth. The caterpillar turns into a pupa (Figure 4) which hangs by its "tail" from the plant. (Figures 5 and 6). The plume moth occurs outside the greenhouse in field-grown Geraniums in California. Whether the Geranium plume moth can survive in any stage outside the greenhouse in the North East of the United States is unknown.



FIGURE 4. Pupa of Geranium plume moth.

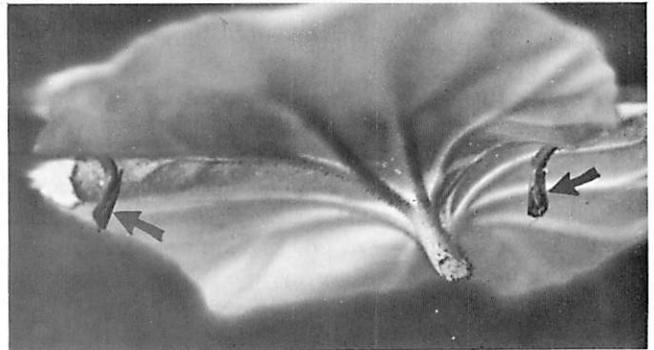


FIGURE 6. Empty pupal cases of Geranium plume moth after emergence of adults.